

CATALOGUE No	OH/PA/101
NAME	FULLER George
ADDRESS	
DATE	23/8/1997
INTERVIEWER	
ABSTRACTER	LAMBERT Floss
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RESTRICTIONS	nil
TAPE	one of four

#### **PUKEKURA PARK TOUR**

##### **0.2 Fountain Park, the lake, Cannon Hill and track**

This is the second guided walk by George! We are all wired up and ready to go! At the central entrance to Fountain Park he describes the site. The lake is entirely artificial; there is also a glow-worm tunnel used by kids for sportsground access. We are nearing Cannon Hill and standing under a large pine from San Diego. A similar pine near the children's playground could be the biggest in the world. George describes the pine root steps on this unused route. A camellia plus tui and a redwood are mentioned. The rubbish tip is in evidence from this Cannon Hill track. Tree ferns are important to the park and the inhibiting factor of their drooping foliage is described.

##### **10.9 Robert Clinton Hughes, Carrington, Cannon Hill Trees.**

The founder of the park was Robert Clinton Hughes who gave 60 years service and planted many trees, including a now unknown kauri. A 1930s photo erroneously features a kauri planted by Carrington. Only stumps are left now from trees removed in the 1950s. Cannon Hill was bare of trees in 1876. The southern side lake was formed, then the north side fountain lake, the eastern sportsground and later the bandstand. The different commemorative trees are now listed - Norfolk pines, yews, pareira and oak. Pine trees mostly, are planted on the hills. George mentions the danger of old pines when resin dries out the branches and they drop unexpectedly. Next is a japanese cedar followed by the redwoods which grow fire protective bark and when broken off by storms produce masses of new shoots. Consequently it is possible for them to live 'forever'.

##### **22.7 Rhododendrons, Pukeiti, Camelias**

Rhododendron (Sir Robert Peel) wood with its musical ring is good firewood and useful for fashioning vases and bowls etc, which could be a Pukeiti source of income. Camerlias are mentioned as a tui food source.

##### **25.7 East Side of Cannon Hill, Del Sutherland, Darcy Jordon**

We are now on the path between the sports ground and fountain. Tanakaha (1880) native trees are slower growing than pines. Camellia (Donation) had to be wire meshed to inhibit thieves. Many tanekaha seedlings are seen in this area(the pine staircase). Our group is now standing beneath a young Norfolk Pine planted by Den Sutherland as a centennial memorial. Here George tells an amusing story about 'poor old Darcy Jordon' who had his khaki shorts ripped off by a little handle barred soil carrying machine.

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PUKEKURA PARK TOUR cont.

0.0 **CANNON HILL AND ITS HISTORY**

George describes the panoramic vista from the top of Cannon Hill where one can watch the world go by. During the 1860s land wars, New Plymouth residents retreated to the safety of the town. There were two forts here, one beyond the kiosk and one on Victoria Road. There was no lake then. Four cannon were later mounted on the hill although there are now only concrete and plinths remaining. Dicky Barrett's cannon is mentioned. A ceremonial kauri tree has been established on the west of the hill.

05.7 **A WHALE SKELETON, THE BAND ROTUNDA**

The group is now standing on a plateau in front of the bandstand. Old postcards show the skeleton of a whale which was brought up to Cannon hill. Only remnants are the left of the vertebrae and the 4 metre high jaw bone which was used as an archway. As finances were difficult, centennial restoration of the bandstand was minimal, as evidenced by the thin concrete steps. A Sound shell was proposed in the 1950s for this area but Mr Goodwin vetoed the site and suggested Brooklands for the now famous Bowl. When the paint on the bandstand's roof was stripped, it was discovered that the Victorian original was stripped. George tells of his astonishment one day when he viewed a broken toilet pan on the bandstand finial. Once, even the finial was stolen, but was returned.

14.8 **Carols in the Park, A perfect Place**

George tells a really humorous story of a drunken naked carol singer performing in the band rotunda at 2am one Christmas morning. The police made a deal - and at 5am, George was again wakened by the merrymaker who had retrieved a white barrier from the lake and had come to tell his so. George also shows the group his perfect place for hiding in order to watch bandstand vandals and to listen to their plans. He enjoys his method of 'throwing' them completely. Shining a torch on them at night is satisfying too.

20.9 **The Drinking Fountain**

The drinking fountain commemorates Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee 1897. It is now 100 years old. George tells of the plan to make the marble lions translucent with suitable lighting but they are concrete backed. He explains how the fountain works and the difficulty of maintaining a constant flow. Acts of vandalism are described. There was once a cup supplied. A fern, a rose, a shamrock and a thistle are

featured but there is no leek - only a leak.

**26.1 The Waterfall, The Dam**

The group is now proceeding towards the waterfall. At a certain place, on the steps to the main lake, the sounds of the waterfall may be heard bouncing back. The dam which formed the main lake had to be most carefully planned and constructed as a breach could cause flooding in the town. The completely artificial lake was formed in 1876/77. A tarata tree is noted and the two cabbage trees feature in the earliest photos of the park.

**30.4 Smith Walk**

W W Smith, the 1902 - 1920 superintendent planted many native trees in the northern park, near the children's playground. He was an internationally renowned ornithologist as well.

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**PUKEKURA PARK TOUR Cont.**

**00.1 The Waterfall**

In 1949, John Goodwin, the new curator suggested, as improvements and new attractions, a fountain, a waterfall, a water wheel and a windmill. The fountain water is recycled but the small flows a problem as regards a water wheel. George resurrected an old rotten waterwheel from the Omata factory. It was rebuilt and taken to the park in 1976. In 1970, NZ Insurance donated money for a water wheel. Fred Parker donated the pump and the electric motor and Ian McDowell and George designed and physically built the waterfall. He describes this in detail (the boulders, power poles and concrete), also the underwater lights they achieved. He like to mingle with the crowd and listen to remarks made.

**09.9 Vandalism**

Some damage has been done, even last night, in front of the railings. Drunks are avoided. Druggies just laugh but are not aggressive. People sometimes were appreciative of George's warnings and pleas to abstain from destructnion (At this stage, Gordon, a member of the group offers to help with water wheel problems and these are discussed briefly).

**13.9 Poet's Bridge**

originally the dam and lake were built as a swimming resource and not for beautification. Early photos show a diving board with ladder and changing rooms building. Robert Clinton Hughes was associated with swimming. There were once plaster of paris nymphs on the lake side but they didn't last long. People also once moored their boats at the lakeside for a charge. Later the park's own fleet was acquired and hired out. They are still here - wooden, clinker built boats, uncommon and very old. Plastic boats could not be introduced as ramming by the heavy wooden variety would smash them. Vandalism goes on past the Poet's Bridge when the boats are out of sight.

**18.0 Ducks**

Ducks are always in trouble. Ramps were built but they couldn't use them and boat ramming ruined the ramps. There is great loss of life amongst the ducklings as there is no protection against dogs (and people) on the land. The only shelter is the Southern end in the bush; and food is at the northern end. It is thus too far for ducklings to swim, especially in a southerly gale. Swans and ducks are harassed by people and boats and have a hard time. george

tells a story of a swan with an arrow through its neck, but also the tale of a man who was attached and knocked down in nesting season.

#### 24.3 **Poet's Bridge again**

The narrow neck here is known as the Dardanelles. The bridge (the original one) was donated by J T Davis when his racehorse 'The Poet' won the Auckland Cup and paid £400. J T Davis was later found drowned in the lake. (Over the bridge). This 1936 replica bridge replaced the original. the first bridge had a flag pole and a flag was raised when the women were swimming there. Many functions were held to raise money for park upkeep - Queen Carnivals. Regattas and fireworks, also Maori canoes hurtling over bars.

This particular Norfolk Pine is the tallest in the park. It is not the typical shape because the surrounding pines come down occasionally and clip the Norfolk's branches off. Mission stations approval of Norfolk pines because of the cross on top.

Up through the trees is the Victoria Road rifle range. George discusses the reasons for the range being built there.

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**Pukekura Park Tour cont**

**00.1 The Pine Blocks**

Don Foxton, a long serving member (20 years?) of the Parks Committee is mentioned by George; a commemorative plaque is pointed out. Looking from the east to west, one notices the tree development. Blocks of once dominant pines were removed (commencing 1965/66) and natives with a scattering of exotics were planted, after the sub soil was gelignited and new top soil introduced. Now 30 years later a magnificent skyline has resulted. Kauri are not found naturally south Kawhia but these (with rimu) are now luxuriant in the park environs. This has resulted in an explosion of birdlife and the necessary insect food. Even young tuis are records (1990).

**05.8 Pine Enhancement, a Lebanese Cedar**

At the Shortland Street entrance, pines were planted (C1965 and 1970s and 80s) to enhance the wonderful mountain view and the eastern block was not removed. George tells of the uncommon Lebanese cedar which came originally from Fred Parker's garden.

**08.4 Saxton Walk, Stainton Dell, Ferneries**

Particular mention is made of the one and only native insect catching sundew plant of 30 years survival. (Herbicides are used, but carefully and sparingly). Early photos reveal no trees in Stainton Dell. A cutting in the bank is pointed out. This makes for easier access to the ferneries, the most significant feature in the park.

**13.0 Intruders**

George is able, from his home, to hear people talking and also unusual noises from the park. He tells several amusing tales of intruders, broken glass, police dogs, kiosk food thieves and the damage, financial and otherwise done by constant break-ins.

**18.7 Kiosk development, Lake work, the Wisteria**

The kiosk surrounds were, at first, not seated but the later development had been done well. George describes the erecting of the landing stage, the driving of the lake piles by Cowleys and the resultant damage to their 'lifting' machine; also the remaining diving board foundation, the site in the 1960s and the old handcart used to collect leaves.

The original wire netting support for the wisteria was a real mistake. It was the first 'aerial compost heap' and because of it, the wisteria couldn't be pruned. This was

rectified (7 trailer loads of rubbish latter) and now the turn of the century plant looks pleasant and is pruned regularly. The fernery entrance is now quite lovely following recent development.

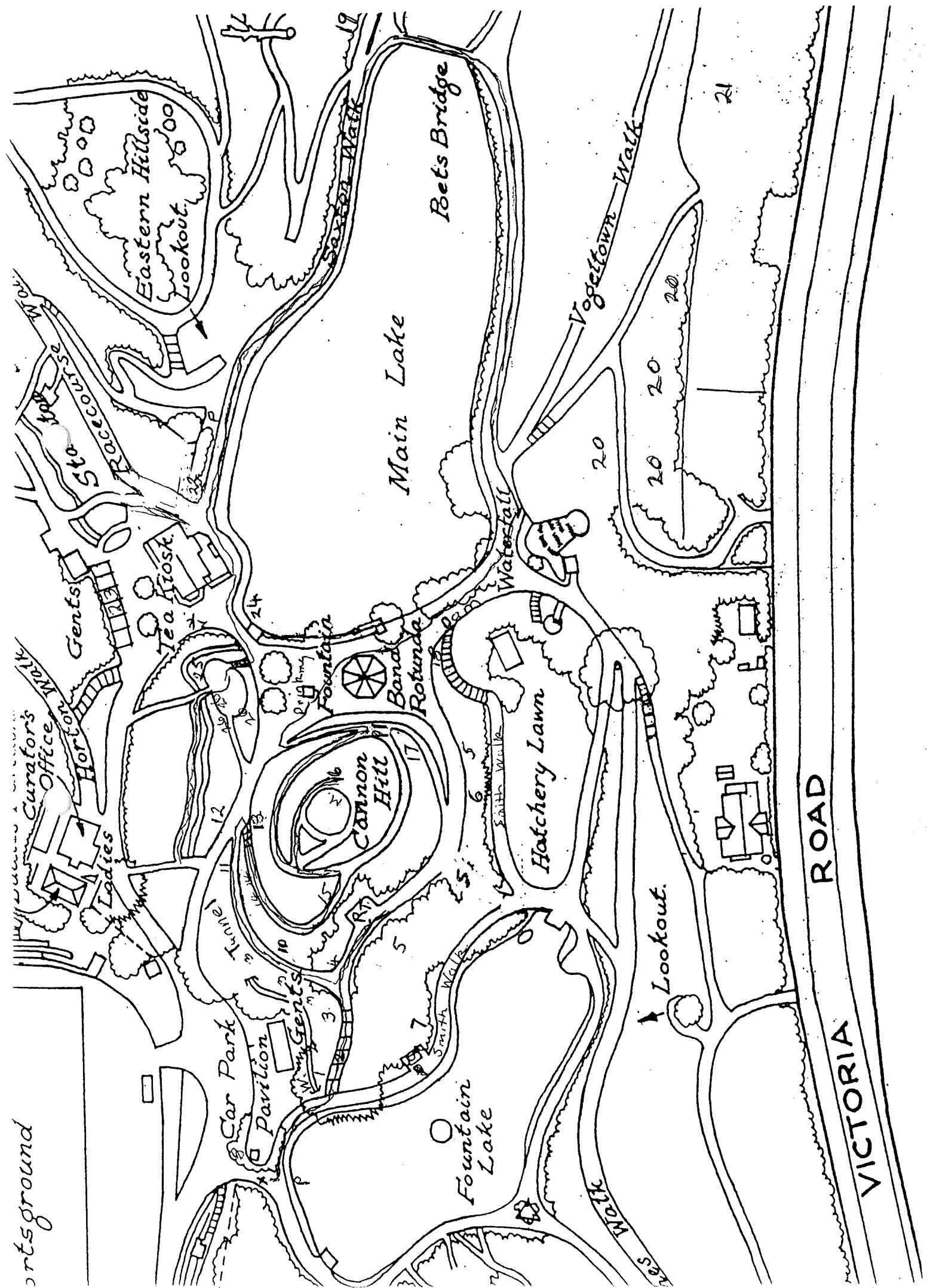
**26.6 Some Spectacular trees, tree ferns, lighting displays**

An old camellia grows near the artificial outflow from the lake. We return to the kiosk and an alternative route to the sports ground. An autumn coloured Nth American (Eastern States) tree is pointed out. 20 meters further and we are in another world, a lovely enclosed area. Meandering through, down to the car park, is the lake overflow. Four different types to tree fern and their habits are described by George. This dell is used for lighting displays. Stones are covered with florescent paint and special lighting makes them glow in the water, also dead branches are painted to resemble animals.

- |  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| 1 Pinus Torreyana  | P. Plaque       |
| 2 Steps of Pine roots                                      | W. Water race   |
| 3 Camelia (single)   | R.T Rubbish Tip |
| 4 Redwood  | M. Mounts       |
| 5 Kauri  | Pl Plateau      |
| 6 Carrington Pine  | P Plaque        |
| 7 Yew Tree   |                 |
| 8 Puriri   |                 |
| 9 <del>1</del> 4 Sequoia sempervirens                      |                 |
| 10 Stump of Pine (possibly Carrington Pine)                |                 |
| 11 Tanekaha (Celery Pine)                                  |                 |
| 12 Camelia - 'Donation'                                    |                 |
| 13. Kauri  |                 |
| 14 Tanekaha seedlings                                      |                 |
| 15 Norfolk Pine  |                 |
| 16 Standing here talking about cannons.                    |                 |
| 17 Kauri   |                 |
| 18 Cabbage Tree  |                 |
| 19 Norfolk Pine  |                 |
| 20 Western side. - Kauri, Rimu, Totaras,<br>Mirros, Acers. |                 |
| 21 Golden Lebanon Cedar                                    |                 |
| 22 Sundew  |                 |
| 23 Wisteria  |                 |
| 24 Camelia   |                 |
| 25 Nyssa sylvatica   |                 |
| 26. Tree ferns   |                 |



ports ground



Tape 3 and 4.

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- |  |    |                      |
|--|----|----------------------|
| 27. Torreyana Pine                         | G. | Gate                 |
| 28. Kauri                                  | S  | Steps                |
| 29. Karaka                                 | +  | Slit Trench          |
| 30. Titoki                                 | F  | Flat ground (firing) |
| 31. Hinau                                  | GG | Glowworm Grotto      |
| 32. Chamaecyparis                          | C  | Caskade              |
| 33. Cryptomeria Japonica. (Japanese Cedar) | P  | Pumphouse            |
| 34. Norfolk Pine                           |    |                      |
| 35. Pohutakawas                            |    |                      |
| 36. Araucaria klinkii                      |    |                      |
| 37. Puriri                                 |    |                      |
| 38. Oak                                    |    |                      |
| 39. Kauri                                  |    |                      |
| 40. Sequoia sempervirens (Redwood)         |    |                      |
| 41. Pokutakawas & Totora                   |    |                      |
| 42. Common Beech.                          |    |                      |
| 43. Camellias                              |    |                      |
| 44. Tarairi                                |    |                      |
| 45. Japanese Cedar                         |    |                      |
| 46. Morton Bay Fig                         |    |                      |
| 47. Camelia                                |    |                      |
| 48. Kahikatea                              |    |                      |
| 49. Carrington Pine                        |    |                      |
| 50. Kauri                                  |    |                      |
| 51. Ginkgo biloba                          |    |                      |
| 52. Shagbark Hickory                       |    |                      |
| 53. Kauri                                  |    |                      |
| 54. Rimu                                   |    |                      |
| 55. Silver Fern                            |    |                      |
| 56. Japanese Cedar                         |    |                      |
| 57. English Yew                            |    |                      |
| 58. Cherry Laurel                          |    |                      |

Pukekura Park  
Sportsground

LIARDET ST Main Gate

Ladies Pavilion  
Curators Office  
Hortory

Gents

Tea Room

Car Park  
Pavilion  
Gents

Canon Hill

Fountain  
Band Rotunda

Hatchery Lawn

Fountain Lake

Palm Lawn

Water wheel

Childrens Play Area

Toilets  
Japanese

Acer's Hillside

Lookout

VICTORIA ROAD

HARRINGTON

